

BLUE GRASS BLADE

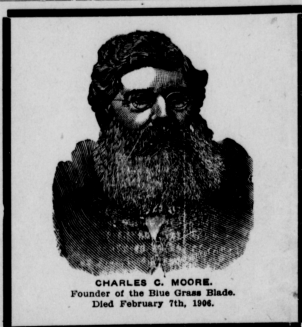
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WE AIM TO CUT DOWN ERROR AND ESTABLISH TRUTH.

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CHARLES C. MOORE.
Founder of the Blue Grass Blade.
Died February 7th, 1906.

JAMES E. HUGHES Editor and Publisher

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EDITORIAL

Truth alone means freedom.

That which is true cannot be evil.

A little thought and a little kindness accomplish more good than gold.

Virtues must have their complements, else they become like vices. The just man must also be generous; else he is hard. The generous man must also be just, else he is weak.

Every day we have opportunity to make our own life a bridge upon which another may pass over to something that he could not have attained by himself.

Bigotry has quailed beneath the ringing blows of Freethought, bigotry has become more humble and the priesthood has well nigh forgotten to prate of a hell of fire in which the unbaptized souls of babes forever burn. This is what humanity owes to Freethought.

Religion is but the ridiculous garment which the ignorant has weaved about so-called Omnipotence. The wise man and philosopher will not mistake the machinery for the principle, the wretched train for the priceless cargo of thought it may contain.

Every recorded miracle is a mere myth, the founders of every religious cult were but mortal men, and the writers of most of the so-called sacred books were only scheming priests. Let this be understood and the Christian religion is stripped of its tattered vestments.

Most preachers assume, or would have the people infer, that they are more sacred than Christ and that God Almighty has taken them into his special and private confidence. America is too much cursed with a grand army of Me-and-God creatures, who

would, if invested with plenary power require heretics to recant on pain of death. Happily for humanity, Freethought has drawn the fiendish fangs from the wolf of religious fanaticism and it can now only tug at its chain and growl. Instead of fixing their eyes constantly upon the kingdom of the God the priests, the priests are chasing the almighty dollars and fighting for political preferment and advancement.

The professors of modern Christianity are the intellectual hours of those who poisoned Socrates on a false supposition and who refused to consider the copernican theory, lest they get an idea into their fat heads that would fracture their theological hats.

The aristocracy of brains differs from those of birth and boodle as the stars differ from a fire-fly. Intellect is the brightest star in the educational firmament of humanity and its glory is shed upon the ether's child, even more than upon the scorbatic outpourings of monarchs and of millionaires.

WE NEED MORE SUBSCRIBERS.

Friends, this an oft-told tale, but we are in need of more subscribers to make the Blade the success it deserves to be. Were the Blade's editorial management capable of earning a livelihood from the Blade's patronage, instead of being compelled to turn to other sources, it could be made a still greater improvement and accomplish still greater good for the meritorious cause of human liberty. What the Blade needs is single attention. To properly look after its editorial work, its make-up and welfare, requires the entire time of its editor. This he is unable to give, because of an insufficient support. Could we double our subscription list before the end of the present year, it could be done and the Blade could be made the best and most interesting Freethought paper in the entire country. We have the will, but we lack the means. One new subscriber sent in by each present subscriber would furnish what is needed. Now the question is can you do it? Will you do it? The issue is before you and it depends altogether upon you.

SOCIALISM IN THE FRENCH CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

Friends of the collectivist principle of socialism may find great enjoyment in the gallant oration, delivered by M. Jean Jaures in the French Chamber of Deputies, his battle with Clemenceau over the ideals of the Socialist propaganda.

Judging from the press reports it was an oratorical clash of unusual brilliancy, a duel of political and economical principles between the virtual head of the French government and the veteran socialist chief. It was the latter to whom the German government paid an extraordinary compliment by prohibiting him from speaking in Germany on a memorable occasion lest he disturb the minds of the German people.

Jaures forced the issue with an interpellation as to the attitude of the Sarrien-Clemenceau ministry toward labor, in which he positively reasserted the soundness of the collectivist principle in socialism. The interpellation was accepted and a date named for the debate. When it became known that Jaures was to speak the French republic crowded into the chamber and he was given an ovation. At this moment the climacteric for socialism in France had come. For two hours, it is said, he held his auditors spell-bound by the elegance of his diction, his intonation, his gorgeous imagery and flights of lofty ideals. It is described as prose poetry delivered in a grand tone, the voice of an organ. On this occasion Jaures declared that the communication of all products of labor in a perfect commonwealth formed the only capable solution for the evils of society.

Doubtless the Jaures's speech has had an electrical effect upon the cause of socialism in the French republic, for his great weight of moral character, his good heartedness and his human sympathy, gives him a prestige that adds lustre and strength to his oratorical ability.

Although the leading articles in the symposium on organization have already been published, the columns of the Blade are not closed to any further discussion upon such a subject. It is too important a question to be abandoned at once. The discussion should be continued until every Freethinker has had his or her say. There is plenty of time and when all have fully spoken then we can determine what action should be taken. The Blade invites further articles on organization. The Blade would like to see an organization of which every Freethinker could be justly proud and point to it as a factor in the development of the race. No organization that is to possess and exercise any influence upon society can be successfully built in a day, but now is the time to begin considering plans to that end and ascertain whether or not such an organization can be built and maintained in America.

The dangers upon which our good ship of state is drifting, in these weak, piping times of peace, arise not in foreign courts and camps, but are conceived in iniquity by the law pampered plutocrats and brought forth in sin by the political bosses of the country. Fire the bosses and the plutocrat loses his power.

RELIGIOUS INVASION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NEW YORK.

Did any Freethinker doubt the necessity of an active, energetic and ambitious Freethought organization, let them now turn to New York and observe the force and power of a movement recently set in operation to secure by law the reading of the Bible and the imparting of religious instruction in the common, public schools.

Angels and ministers of grace, defend us! Not content with their million dollar edifices, their sectarian schools and colleges, to say nothing of the thousands of Sunday schools dotted over the land, legal enactments are now sought to convert the little, red school-house into religious institutions that the young may be educated in the fear and terror of a vengeful God that the priesthood may be guaranteed a continued support from future generations, fearful lest the agnosticism of the age overtake and destroy them.

The movement, which is backed by ministers of all denominations and votaries of widely differing sects, has for its object the passage of a rule by the Board of Education, providing for such religious instruction in the public schools as shall be pleasing and acceptable to a majority of the Christian sects. This must be met and fought by the rationalists of that great metropolis. It is their duty to offer all the resistance of which they are capable. Of course there is a possibility that there would be no "agreement" upon the particular text books to be used, but when we stop to consider that there appears to be a union of accepted antagonistic forces to accomplish a common purpose, that possibility becomes too remote to be deserving of consideration. The movement is designed, solely, against what they are pleased to denominate "Godless public schools," and the proposition promulgated is to have in the curriculum of the public schools a provision for one lesson each week on the "great truths that are accepted by all denominations." In order to successfully and completely deceive the members of the Board of Education as to their real motive, it is further suggested that "a lesson in moral philosophy be given twice a week." Religious instruction and moral instruction to be given at different times. What a bluff! Every doctor of divinity in the land claims that there is no morality worth the having except that which they claim is contained in the Bible, and this would mean three Bible lessons each week, say the advocates of teaching religion once and moral philosophy twice.

The fact that morality is not dependent upon religion may be inferred from the published statements of those who are advocating the move. Bishop Greer is quoted as saying: "There must be moral and religious training among the children of our public schools, if we expect to continue to be a righteous nation." The very expression "moral and religious" placed in the conjunctive is a tacit admission of their absolute independence of each other. In other words, what is moral is not necessarily religious, and what is religious is not necessarily moral. This view is reported as being supported by Rev. Dr. Atterbury, a Presbyterian Bible-banger who also recommends the preparation of a religious text-book for common use in the schools. Rabbi Mendes, a Jewish priest, also gives encouragement to the movement and is said to have declared that "this generation is irreverent and irreverence leads to immorality." Father McMillan, of the Paulist Catholic educational brotherhood takes the same view but with an eye to business rather than the public good, he very cautiously suggests that "on account of religious differences we shall have to be very careful in preparing a text-book."

Reading between the lines one can readily perceive the motive that is under the whole movement. Simply a union of forces against a common foe and to secure a perpetuation of their religious dogmas and offices at public expense. The "irreverence" of the age complained of simply means a general disbelief in the existence of a personal God. This growing disbelief is rapidly undermining the church citadels, wresting from them the unholy political power they have hitherto enjoyed and want to use for personal profit and aggrandizement. They clearly recognize that the mental attitude of the age, one of the potent results of education, is antagonistic to church influence and power, that the fires upon their unclean altars are slowly but surely dying out, and that the very structure of Christianity is undermined, weakened and partially destroyed. Why, then, this combination? Simply this. All denominations profess a belief in God and the efficacy of the cleansing power of the Blood of Jesus Christ. These are the doctrines to be taught. The inculcation of such mental moonshine is calculated to benefit all alike. Once get these doctrines firmly implanted in the minds of the children and some sect is duly bound to reap the benefit. Religious differences, which will still continue, is to be relied upon to furnish a prorata distribution of the sectarian adherents.

If the Board of Education is wise it will refuse to adopt any such rule as that proposed. To engraft such a system upon the public schools would be a distinct violation of the provisions of the federal constitution, but in all probability, these advocates of sectarian faiths feel that there is considerable power and force in that political shibboleth, "Of what use is the constitution between friends?" Again, if the Freethinkers of New York be wise,

if they are alert to their own interests, they will take immediate steps to effectually resist this threatened encroachment upon their rights and privileges. Are there not enough Freethinkers, i. e. rationalists, agnostics, liberals, and atheists in that seething city, to put a bold front on the matter and fight it to a finish? Surely there are some Davids ready to meet these Goliaths of Gath and with the slings of truth hurl a veritable Gibraltar of sound argument against such illegal purposes.

Don't wait until it is everlastingly too late. Get to work now and be prepared to meet the orthodox foe. If the Blade had the means at its command it would take up the cudgel in defense of the people's rights and prevent, if possible, this sectarian invasion of the little, red schoolhouse of America.

Here is an instance wherein a powerful and active organization of Freethinkers could render valuable service. Here is an evidence of the need of such an organization properly supported. Here is an evidence of the almost criminal negligence of Freethinkers in failing to be prepared for just such emergencies. The Blade makes strong utterance because it feels strongly upon the subject. There is nothing to be gained, nothing to be understood by saying one thing and meaning another. If we are to maintain our rights as sovereigns of this republic, it is time we get a move upon ourselves and prepare to meet organization with organization. Single handed we are overthrown one by one. United we are a rock against which the powers of hell will battle in vain.

RELIGION AND CRIME.

The oft-repeated assertion that religious teaching subverses the highest and best moral influences, was delivered a powerful blow in the city of Lexington, Friday, July 6th. On that day James Pearsall, a young negro, was legally hanged for an unspeakable crime against an old and imbecile woman, and like all others of his class, he died in the firm belief that through repentance he had been redeemed and, consequently, it is only one step from the gallows to eternal glory in the New Jerusalem.

That the readers of the Blade may fully understand the situation, the following is taken from the published report of the hanging as given by the leading newspaper of this city.

When the service was ended, Rev. Oglesby turned to Pearsall and said:

"If you have a statement you want to make now is the time for you to make it. Do you want to make any statement?"

"Yes, sir," replied the doomed wretch.

"Then you can make it now. If you want to make any confession of guilt or innocence it should be made now as you are about to confront your God."

With this injunction the doomed man faced the crowd and in a scarcely audible voice said:

"I want to thank Mr. Wallace, the jailer and others for treating me so nice. I want to thank the death watch for using good to me. I have had no trouble with any of them."

Here Pearsall faltered. The words seemed to choke him and he appeared unable to proceed further, but indicating that he had not finished. Rev. Oglesby spoke words of encouragement to him and said:

"Tell the truth. The Lord wants you to tell the truth."

Pearsall spoke a little louder and replied:

"I have been in this jail for seventeen months, and I have never had a cross word with anybody. I am going home now. I want to meet you all in heaven. I am going home."

"Are you prepared to die?" was asked.

"Yes, sir. I am saved and redeemed."

"Are you innocent of the crime for which you are to die?"

"Yes, I am innocent."

"Do you make the statement in the presence of God?"

"Yes, in God's presence."

"Very well, Pearsall, the end has come."

What truth there may be in the pressed thoughts of the culprit as above quoted, there is but one inference. That inference is that the surest and safest passport through the Pearly Gates is by the gallows route; that it is better, and your chances for heaven are greater, to be born a negro rape-friend than to be born an Ingersoll or a Paine. Should the Blade's editor be presented with a free ticket to a front seat near the throne with the understanding that eternity had to be spent in the company of such a bestial brute, it would be declined with thanks and a preference expressed for more congenial society even though the climatic conditions be unfavorable.

Here was a man, convicted by a jury of twelve men, of the foulest, the blackest crime known to human society, actually confessing to a belief that he was a fit subject for heaven. If his confession was true, why hang him? If he is fit to associate with the angels in highest heaven and sing hosannas about the throne of the Most High, is he not also a fit companion for men? Did the mere fact of hanging him transform him from a vile wretch to a virtuous saint? Is a creature unfit for earth fit for heaven? Saved and redeemed and yet unfit for heaven?

(Continued on page four, first column).

SIXTEENTH CHAPTER FROM THE ROME BOOK

(By DR. J. B. WILSON).

Since the Christian religion enters so largely into the history of Rome and since much that I will have to describe will pertain to it, it will not be out of place here to give a short history of the rise of this cult, and of its founder.

Whether the doctrine be true or false, it is always the same. It is not a matter of reason or thought or truth or fact. The faction persecuted grows through sympathy. If the Romans had not persecuted the Christians, if they

But persecution had the effect of causing Christianity to thrive; and

ple. The truth of the rise of Christianity has been expunged from Encyclopedias and school histories. The clergy have exalted Constantine to a divinity, and have succeeded in blinding the eyes of the world to the monstrous inception of Christianity into it.

It was under the reign of Constantine that Christianity became the established religion of Rome, and built for whom, as far as human probabilities can be calculated, it never would have come down to us. It is well that

There are several accounts of the conversion of Constantine, a subject which will be of interest to the reader. To be perfectly fair, I will give both the Christian and Pagan narratives of

Being particularly sorry for the death of his son, Crispus, he applied to Sopater, the Pagan philosopher for comfort; but was told "There are

In this day and age of the world, we would search for a Herrman and his assistants in the loft or cellar, but that was the day of "miracles," and he

Editorial

(Continued from page one.)

associate with human beings! What a farce, what a travesty on all moral influences! "Going home now." Indeed! Far better for the unfortunate victim of his rapacious lust had he gone "home" before committing his awful deed.

Further comment is unnecessary. It need only be added that the culprit was reported to have been a faithful Sunday school scholar. This is certainly enough.

No power in society, no hardship in your condition can depress you, keep you down in knowledge, virtue and influence, but by your own consent.

SOCIAL INFAMY THE OPEN SESAME TO DEATH AND DISHONOR.

Columns have been written and published about the killing of Stanford White by Harry Thaw in a fashionable resort at New York. Columns have yet to be written and published on the same subject and the reading public is to be nauseated with the miserable, brutishness of swell society. The tragedy had its origin in lawless lust and brutal bestiality. It furnishes stronger proofs than ever that despite all our safeguards of law and the restraining influences of education, swell society is growing more hopelessly corrupt amid all our advancing civilization. To fracture the seventh commandment is considered but a venial, trivial sin, provided the debauchee be possessed of great wealth, but a sin meriting condemnation, and worse, if the perpetrator be poor.

The worst part of this fulsome tragedy is that both sides enjoy an almost unlimited amount of money and thus are being freely used to subsidize the press that public opinion may be formed one way or the other. When the trial of Thaw begins it will undoubtedly be made a revelation to many of the actual immorality and gross vulgarities of the so-called respectable and our American social system. It will reveal dens of social infamy, dens of drunken debauchery, in comparison with which the bacchanal orgies of the ancients were pleasant memories. It will reveal a patchwork of human society woven of passion's infernal web in the great loom of Time. The tales of the sensuous Cleopatra and of false Helen of Troy pale and crumble into insignificance beside the revolting and disgusting details of the Thaw case. This gross tragedy and its antecedent causes constitute one of the foulest blots ever known upon the escutcheon of humanity. It emanated from the most depraved coteries of unclean harpies in all the four regions of hell's hierarchy.

The average American citizen may now learn, though with amazement, that there is around them an illimitable world of life well known to the paleontologists and scientists, but upon which the unaided vision of the mass of the people has never been focused. The phenomena is there, however, but the layman ignorantly passes it by because of his unfamiliarity with it. Such tragedies as these furnish them with a powerful glass through the lens of which, he can see a powerful light previously hidden from his ken, and yet, unable to comprehend it as the savants comprehend it. Strange as the assertion may seem, it is not the number of professional bawds that constitute the greatest menace to social purity, but the brutishness of the rich, their selfish indifference, their unrestrained licentiousness and positive vulgarity.

What mad fantasy is this that swell society in America is chasing? Time was when a woman branded as a common strumpet hid her face in actual and positive shame. But, gentle reader, the fault is not inherent in the daughters of Eve. One of two things is driving legion after legion to the cohorts of shame. It is either lawless lust or force of circumstances. Yet in spite of these incalculable warnings there are advocates of even greater crime, human beings who would break the bonds of lawful restraint and make of liberty a synonym for license. We have cast behind us the myths and miracles of the past and proven to the great world their ridiculous absurdity; we have brought hundreds of the most cherished idols of our uneducated ancestors beneath the iconoclastic hammer of Free Thought, but the Blade calls a halt upon those who would advocate a general social and marital housecleaning, lest in the process we also consign social purity and virtue to the rubbish heap and add further fuel to lust's unholy fires. The history of the world is decidedly against such a policy for along the common path there are strewn broken altars and ruined fane all blasted by this self-same curse. Turn once again to the character of the principals in this dark tragedy and we find that the Paphian Venus still flaunts her scarlet flag in the face of humanity.

There is another reminder to be drawn from this tragedy as portraying the character of the woman who are paid to entertain the American public on the stage. Evelyn Nesbit, the impure female, who was the indirect cause of White's tragic death, was a companion and daily associate of the notorious Nan Patterson, who brought about the death of her paramour, which also took place in gay and giddy Gotham. They both belonged to and took part in the corrupt Florodora sextette. The Nesbit woman may have been trying to lead a more moral life since she became Mrs. Thaw, but from her previous conduct the foundations for White's death were laid. As for the victim and his slayer, neither were worth the price of the powder to blow them to hell. White was one who would turn from consenting Venus to solicit the scornful Dian. Thaw was a drunken, narcotic-eating profligate. Both had the misfortune to be possessed of more boodle than brains. It were better for the world had none of the unclean outfit ever been born. With such men as these the courtesan came into popular favor.

They sought the demi-monde. Among them they found boon companions and kindred spirits. The life of both, especially that of White, has been one grand hypocrisy.

True enough, all this impels one to infer that there is something radically wrong with our social system and a decided change is necessary. The fault lies with our so-called aristocracy and their brutal indifference, which like a deadly poison, percolates through the underlying strata and threatens to eliminate womanly continence from the world. The masculine leaders of swell society are not Josephs and there is not one among them who would, with deliberation, overdo Joseph's part. On the contrary they ask to be forgiven a score, or more, of mistresses, but would readily damn a woman for one fault, one sin. Again, we might suggest, that it is not every woman who is willing to play Pauline to Claude Melnotte and wear upon her person a costus of bleeding hearts.

The Blade readily concedes the fact that no man can violate the Seventh Commandment without considerable assistance, but nine times out of ten he is the tempter. It is a pitiful circumstance, and a reproach upon our social system, that a man injures his character far worse by the theft of a mule than he does by the deliberate theft of maidenly purity. Society looks upon the latter crime as a mere matter of course, but will send him to the penitentiary, if caught, for the former. The male leper may be received in high society, permitted to pay court to his neighbor's daughter, but the horse thief is altogether and irremediably corrupt. Man knows that the stain of lechery is upon him, but in the mad swirl he forgets his victim and struggles on, consciously, towards the stars. He may have a sincere regard for the purity of his own wife and daughter, but enjoys a reckless disregard for his neighbor's rights. To give wider license to men harmonizes neither with the canons of decency or common sense. Man must learn that there is such a thing as shame and once this fact is firmly engrained upon his moral being the world will be better for it.

The Blade did not intend to indulge in such a lengthy discussion of an unsavory subject when this editorial comment upon the Thaw-White tragedy, but once fairly launched into it, there was so much could be said, and still much more that might have been said, that we are bound to refrain, lest our readers grow weary. We now close by asserting that man cannot draw inspiration to lofty deeds from dishonor, that no man or woman can continue to be grand after they have ceased to be good. Social infamy is the open sesame, then, to death and dishonor.

NEWSPAPERS ABSORBING THE FUNCTIONS OF JURY TRIALS.

During a recent jury trial in Lexington, where a man was accused of a capital crime, the learned counsel for the defendant took occasion to remark to the jury that "newspaper verdicts don't go in this court." What ever might have been the motive that existed in the mind of this disciple of Blackstone to prompt the remark there was much of force in the thought, for it is a matter of public knowledge that the newspapers have, for the most part, usurped the functions of the juries and proceeded to try a person accused of crime, in many instances, before a public opinion in the case, either of bias or prejudice.

We are truly living in an age of progress and nowhere is this shown more clearly than in the evolution of English jurisprudence, as it has filtered through the American constitution, and gradually, but with considerable success, relieved the petit jury of many of the exacting responsibilities. Time was not so very long when "twelve men good and true," chosen from the village, were supposed to be quite capable of ascertaining the facts from the evidence whenever a fellow-citizen got in bad with the grand jury. That is all changed now. The newspapers have taken over most of the jury's duties. This is proven by the many men who confess to entertaining an opinion on the question of guilt or innocence simply from reading the newspaper accounts of the alleged crime. All the juror has to do now is to tell whether he be married or not, if he has any children of the same age and sex as the defendant, whether he is prejudiced against certain nationalities or races, and if he is of legal age. This is all now that is required to qualify him.

From this point the press gets in its work. First the defendant is photographed and his picture is published. If she be a woman she is photographed in different attitudes and is snap-shotted every time she crooks her elbow to see if her hat is on straight. Scores of criminologists, fresh from the sanctum, hove about her. This one writes a scater story which is given over for publication. Another tells how innocent she was at the age of four years. Another tells all the women in the neighborhood to find out what they would want the jury to do if their daughter were on trial for the same offense, and so on, ad infinitum, ad nauseum.

Whether all this simplifies matters, as far as jury trials are concerned, may be a question of considerable doubt. Naturally, it makes the story of the crime more crude and caps is the main thing the newspapers of today desire. As a matter of fact the criminal code in Kentucky was conceived on justice and framed on mercy. There is little chance of an innocent person failing to get a square deal. No juror, or, at least, not in many hundreds really wishes to convict, and all of them practically, hope to be able to acquit when sworn in. It is possible that there may be a miscarriage of justice, through error, but in such an event there is a remedy for that in the higher tribunals.

The jury system needs considerable improvement. It is far from being perfect and affording that full protection for which it was established. It is a fact that even in our modern jurisprudence, justice does not always prevail and innocence is not always a perfect shield. The tendency of the modern newspaper does not improve matters but make them worse.

MAKES BRILLIANT ORATION AT GRAVE

Dr. J. B. Wilson, Well Known Freethinker, Preachers Address at Mrs. Williamson's Funeral.

NO SINGING OR PRAYING.

Prof. John Burke Speaks at House Cemetery.

The funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Williamson, wife of the late Captain John Williamson and the aunt of Josephine K. Henry, the noted Kentucky Free thinker and woman's rights advocate, took place yesterday afternoon in Evergreen Cemetery.

There was no minister present and no services were conducted without singing and without prayer.

Prof. John Burke, former Superintendent of the Newport Schools, spoke at the house. At the grave Dr. J. B. Wilson, the well-known Cincinnati Freethinker, delivered an oration that was considered so much of a classic by those who heard it that it is here printed in full. Dr. Wilson said: "No singing in woman's graves." "When we look abroad in the world there seems to be no ebbing in the great waves of humanity.

"Birth, life and death are in perpetual flux. Eternal change is everywhere. As the waves of the sea are ever ushered into existence they pass out of it.

"In comes the infant and out goes the aged.

"We elude, gloriously, nature builds up, and is mercilessly she tears down. "Fortunate are many who live but a few brief days or years, and fortunate are the many who live not to be too old.

"But few of us can look upon death philosophically, because our affections sway our natures, and it is well that it is so. It is well that love lasts longest.

"Ging to Those Dear to Us.

"No mind is so young, and no matter how old, that is not a celestial key, that makes of the puzzle of life a kingdom where all is harmony and justice and satisfaction.

"Carelessly, joyously, we sit around our firesides until the specter dreaded by us all comes in, and one is taken from our midst—hands that have caressed us, eyes that have beamed love upon us, bosoms upon which have rested our weary heads, lips whose kisses have dried our tears and eased our heart pains, looks that have fallen over us like a bath of beauty—are laid to rest beneath the shroud-folds.

"We come and stand, around the staves of the grave, as we lower the loved form, hear the heavy rumble of the clouds, and swift memories of all the loved one was to us surge thick in our brains, and in a burst of passion grief it seems that we never, never again can still the cry of our aching hearts.

"Shadows Finally Drift.

"But the days rise and set—dimly at first—and seasons come and go, and by little and little the weight rises from the heart, and the shadows drift from before the eyes, till we feel again the spirit of gladness and see again the old beauty of the world.

"Again the morning lifts her eyes and looks upon us, as she comes through her bright gates, trailing her crimson robes through the dew.

"Again the rose bowers of summer have their wealth of fragrance and varied charms.

"Again orchard and meadow are bright with blossoms and vocal with melody.

"Sun Again Scintillates.

"Again the sun is scintillant in his azure shield, and again the moon glows enchantingly, whether she have all her golden filling or hangs like a silver ring in the blue arching of the sky.

"It is thus we come into this great mystery we call life, and thus we go out.

"It is thus our heartstrings are torn and their ends are needed. It is thus joy displaces sorrow, and it is thus pain is relieved, and smiles to take the place of every frown.

"As others have had to pass out of life to make room for us, so we, in turn, pass out of life to make room for the unborn.

"Gradual forgetfulness, and finally utter oblivion is the fate of us all. At last we go to mingle with the elements and become a part of the stern cold, which the sun turns with his share and treads upon.

"And this is all of existence that we know anything about.

"Nature Rejoices All.

"In silence to her bosom, nature receives both the good and the bad. She giveth all, she taketh all back to herself; the Jew, the Catholic, the Protestant, the Agnostic, the Pagan, the Savage, each as sweetly sleeps on her loving breast.

"The sun shines as brightly, the rain falls as freely, the flowers bloom as

lovely, the birds sing as gladly, the winds play as softly over the grave of one as over the grave of another.

"The one who died by faith hath no preeminence over the one who died with reason for his guide.

"Meet Nature's Indifference.

"With nature, belief is no virtue nor belief no crime. Whether orthodox or heterodox, it is all the same, and as such all lie down to that eternal rest called death. They meet with naught but nature's calm indifference.

"Our good Christian friends tell us that the future consists of a heaven of eternal happiness and a hell of eternal misery, and that only the few who entertain their belief will be rewarded with eternal bliss, and all those who are indifferent to, or who oppose their belief will suffer eternal punishment in that other irrevocable place.

"This is the most cruel judgment the most infinite conceit, the most gigantic illusion of the human mind.

"People believe as they must—as their brains are shaped—as to race, climate, environment.

"Not Formed to Believe Alike.

"Nature has not formed men to believe alike; therefore, punishment for a difference of belief is unnatural—a gross and cruel contradiction to even a shadow of the substance of justice.

"There is no cruelty conceivable equal to that of a God creating mankind imperfect, and to believe differently, and then to torture them forever and ever for their imperfections and differences of belief.

"This good woman whom we are laying away to her eternal rest lived to outgrow and repudiate the many prejudices and theories, and especially that monstrous dogma of damnation which for so many centuries has poisoned the happiness and hindered the progress of mankind.

"In its sympathies and compassion humanity is too far removed from such a horrible belief, which makes a veritable monster of the Almighty.

"How much longer will men continue to imprint this vicious nightmare and savage the dead upon the plastic brain of trustful childhood?

"Know Nothing of Future.

"Of the future we all know that none of us know anything. We can only hope and dream and wait. We feel that somewhere, there is a celestial key, that makes of the puzzle of life a kingdom where all is harmony and justice and satisfaction.

"But no religion or creed of all the many in the world, holds a first mortgage on the future existence, or controls its government. All such claims are but childish pretense or bigoted assertion.

"Nature has not obligated you or me, or any one, to give our intellectual sanction or attach ourselves to the Christian or to any other superstition.

"We can all believe in Providence, in a Supreme Power of some kind, and in a future life, and hope to meet again, without prostituting our intelligence to a belief in the impossible mirages, ghostly parentages, foolish myths, savage judgments and cruel beliefs which theology has transmitted to mankind out of the wonder, ignorance and fear which clouded the brains of men through the dark night of the past.

"Possibility of Goodness.

"We will reject any and all creeds, and still be good, honest, upright, progressive, merciful and loving.

"Nature intended that the brain of man should be free to think and to doubt, and not that it should be clamped to a creed or fettered to a fear.

"Just as the human mind has been liberated from the prison of the past, just so has humanity progressed; just so has life grown sweeter and grander.

"Just as we have escaped from fear of the Almighty, and of an eternal hell, more and more we come to look upon life philosophically and put a higher value on it; and less and less has grown the fear of the grave.

"Why should the grave be terrible? Why should it be a word of fear? Jarring on the mortal ear?

"There repose and silence dwell; The living hear the funeral knell. But the dead no funeral knell can hear.

"Does the gay flower scorn the grave? The dew forgets to kiss its turf? The stream refuses to bathe it, or the leaves to rustle about it?

"Of moonlight shun the narrow bed? There the pilgrim rests his head; No, the moon is there and shining too, And the sweetest song of the morning is oft in that ancient yew tree heard; And there you may see the harebell blue.

"Bending his light form gently, proudly, And listen to the fresh winds loudly Playing around your soul as they say As if it were a holiday, And children freed from durance they."

"Life's Pride Steps.

"Here the pomp and pride of life come to a stop. Here rank and station find the end.

"Social distinctions no further go. The warm avatars the millionaire as well as the pauper—the Archbishop as

well as the heretic; and all the barriers built in life between man and man, whether from diversity of thought, from race, riches or religion, are vanished forever in this silent city, this domain of the dead.

"We now consign the body of this much-loved wife, mother, neighbor and friend to the peaceful grave, believing that one common destiny awaits all around, which shall end and be life everlasting, or an eternal sleep.

All Fear is Absent.

"And while we may her away with reverence and respect, with sorrow and regret, all fear is absent, for nowhere nature inspired any fear. If there be another life, for which we all hope, it will be well with her. If not, it will be well for it will be as nature intended, and from her decisions there is no recourse.

"To nature, then, our universal mother, we now give back her own.

"With all her sweet influences, rest, cheer, dear friend, under the blue canopy of the sunny sun, when still evening plucks the curtains of the night and reveals the ever new-born wonders of the star-dome.

Life's Trials Over.

"Forever past the trials of life, and free from all its sorrows and pains, sleep on. Sleep on while the eternal seasons unceasingly roll—through the budding springtimes when the apple blossoms laugh into blossom and the primroses nod with the sunbeams; through the enlivening sunbeams, robed in flowered green and thrilled with sunset glow; through the russet autumn when the drapery trees are dipped in gold, or stand in rival rows of gold; through the win, with its winds, which shroud the graves of the dear loved dead with their fleecy robes of untracked snow.

"Sleep on! It will be as 'twill be, and as well that it is not given for us to know.

"Thus art gone, as we all must go, to sweet, eternal rest, forever to mingle with nature's mysterious moods, like the morning star melts into the glorious effulgence of the perfect day!"

To Do Good Our Religion.

Puntagorda, Fla., Editor Blade—"They can organize to stay, if they do not the millions around their necks in the way of life, platforms and beds. Let their platform be 'The World is Our Home, and to do Good is Our Religion.' The Bible, Jesus and all religious miracles are a lot of Santa Claus stories made by the clergy to feather their own nests.

"The foregoing is enough platform or constitution with which to win the world, for every Freethinker can stand on it and think as he pleases. Let them organize wherever two or three can come together in a neighborhood and on Sunday let them meet and discuss astronomy, Geography, Electricity or some subject that will improve the world and better the conditions of the human race.

By all means they should have Sunday Schools to drill the children in good manners, politeness and to sing patriotic songs. Freethinkers this organization will stay and soon route superstition and witchdoctors—ISAAC H. TRABUE.

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